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Connecticut Citizens Defense League, Inc.

Testimony of Jeff Tang before the Judiciary Committee, Room 2C LOB, March 23, 2011

Testimony Opposing:

SB 1094 An Act Banning Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines

And Supporting:

SB 1210 An Act Concerning the Use of Deadly Physical Force to Defend the Residents of a Home.

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jeff Tang, the Membership Coordinator for the Connecticut Citizen's Defense League (CCDL) and Secretary for the Stratford Gun Collectors Association, residing in Fairfield. I am a self-employed carpenter with my own small business, loving husband, regular church-goer, and gun owner.

•Opposing SB 1094 An Act Banning Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines:

I strongly oppose this Act because it places an outrageous and unjustified burden on the gun owners of this State. There has been a strong and well-reported outcry from the public against this bill, which may convince this Committee that S.B. 1094 is completely inappropriate and unwanted. Beyond this, I have substantial practical and rational reasons to stop this bill and any future bills like it.

The stated purpose of SB 1094 is to "prohibit the possession of certain ammunition feeding devices that accept more than ten rounds." As an end result, this would seem to lack merit in and of itself; presumably these devices might be banned because doing so would keep the people of Connecticut safer. However, this line of thinking is based on erroneous assumptions, and were this bill to become law, it would not enhance the safety or security of the people of Connecticut. SB 1094 would, in fact, irreparably harm the people of this State.

When I speak about this topic with people unfamiliar to firearms or the shooting sports, they express a mistaken belief that reduced-capacity magazines would render a gun less deadly in the hands of a criminal. They believe that by forcing a criminal to remove and replace several magazines of reduced capacity rather than using one magazine of standard capacity presents a significant barrier, especially in mass shootings like the recent atrocity in Tuscon, Arizona. If a criminal runs out of ammunition, they believe, the shooting will stop long enough for onlookers to intervene and stop the violence.

Mass shootings where a prepared criminal deliberately murders and wounds numerous strangers or associates are, thankfully, relatively rare. In the United States, there have been roughly 100 since the University of Texas shooting in 1966, averaging about 2.2 per year. Compare this to the rate of death from lightning strikes at an average 82 per year. But 100 total and 2.2 per year is still too many, and citizens are right to fear these scenarios. In the Virginia Tech shooting, Seung-Hui Cho brought 19 magazines, and several eye witnesses reported him having changed magazines numerous times during the shooting. He went through at least 10 of those magazines, some of which only held 10 rounds. Similarly, Nadal Hassan expended at least 3 magazines, having brought some 300 rounds of ammunition to the scene of the shooting at Fort Hood. Running out of ammunition was not a problem for these criminals.

Every citizen has a right
to bear arms in defense
of himself and the state.



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•Supporting SB 1210 An Act Concerning the Use of Deadly Physical Force to Defend the Residents of a Home.

There are few situations more frightening than a home invasion; largely because a person's home is the safe place, the place to retreat to from the stresses of the outside world. No one likes to consider the possibility that violence or danger from the outside world could penetrate the protection provided by a home's walls. But the horror of the home invasion in Cheshire, where 3 women were brutally killed and one man barely escaped, is still in the minds of many Connecticut citizens.

When citizens do consider such terrifying ideas, they can only hope to have the chance to defend their lives against criminal home invaders. Stopping such a criminal may require deadly force, force likely to kill an attacker. The possible use of such force is a grave responsibility, which no one undertakes lightly, and which is generally a serious crime. However, Connecticut law makes the need to defend the self or another an affirmative defense, rendering this serious action a regretful and legally justifiable necessity. Few would claim that a victim should allow him or herself to be killed, rather than risk killing the attacker.

But citizens whose only option is to use deadly force to stop a home invasion are routinely arrested, convicted of crimes, and then held liable in civil court for damages, because they cannot convince a jury that their actions were reasonable. I support SB 1210 because it would remove this extra burden for the victims of such crimes. No longer would the victim of a home invasion, who narrowly avoided being the victim of rape or murder, have to justify the use of deadly force against an attacker in the home. Does anyone really believe that someone would break into a home with good intentions? Or can anyone deny that the forcible violation of the sanctity of someone's own home is a serious threat of violence, similar to brandishing a deadly weapon?

Statistics show that States with stronger "Castle Law" or "Castle Doctrine" -type laws, like SB 1210, have lower rates of home invasions and related crimes. The evidence proves that when these laws are introduced, such crime decreases. Criminals do fear residents who are able to protect themselves, especially when citizens do not have to balance fear of life with fear of the law. Connecticut will be a safer place, with no cost to the State, if citizens do not have to choose between "being judged by twelve" and "being carried by six", as the popular saying goes.

Thank-you for hearing and reading my testimony. If the members of the Judiciary Committee have any further questions, please contact me, Jeff Tang, at membership@ccdl.us

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Connecticut State Constitution, Article First, Section 15